

Monthly Newsletter

June 2012

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Featured Successes

“Drug Czars” Hold Plenary Session

White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Director Gil Kerlikowske and Russian Federal Drug Control Service (FSKN) Director Viktor Ivanov co-chaired the sixth plenary session of the Counternarcotics Working Group and held various site visits in St. Petersburg, May 23-25. The delegations were briefed by the respective interagency teams on progress made over the last six months in the field of counternarcotics cooperation. The co-chairs confirmed continued cooperation between the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Russian FSKN and

continued support for the Government of Afghanistan’s effort to eliminate narcotics networks. They worked out a common position on exchanging data on combating global drug traffic flows, and agreed to continue to exchange information on effective drug treatments and rehabilitation programs. They decided to hold the next plenary in the United States in the second half of 2012 to mark the three-year anniversary of the creation of the Working Group. The delegations also visited the St. Petersburg City Narcological Hospital, where the members spoke with recovering drug-addicted patients participating in a treatment and rehabilitation program.



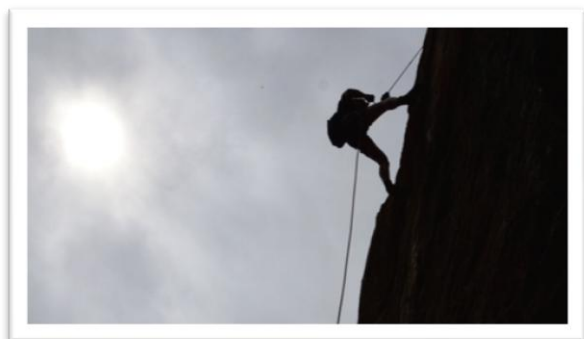
The FSKN Special Operations Forces conduct a live demonstration.
(Photo credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

At the FSKN North-West Institute of Advanced Training, the U.S. and Russian delegations attended a graduation ceremony for counternarcotics officers from Central Asia and

Afghanistan and also observed a live training demonstration conducted by the FSKN Special Operations Forces. (*Counternarcotics WG*)

U.S. and Russian Forces Joint Training

For about two weeks in late-May, 20 Russian soldiers conducted joint training with U.S. forces at Fort Carson, Colorado, and a day of mountaineering familiarization in the mountains west of the Fort.



Mountaineering familiarization and parachute jumps were two training components during the May 2012 bilateral activities at Fort Carson.
(Photo Credit: U.S. Army Special Operations Command)



The training consisted of tasks common to both units: marksmanship, parachute jumps, communications, and medical evacuations. The end result of this program is an improved understanding of how the other foreign military works, thus enhancing the operational effectiveness of allied forces. For decades, the U.S. military has routinely conducted joint training with foreign forces in order to

strengthen relationships, enhance familiarization with tactics and procedures, and exchange best practices. (*Military Cooperation WG*)

U.S. Attorney General Holder Meets Ministry of Justice Officials

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder led a Department of Justice delegation to Russia, May 14-17, where he met with Russian officials and also addressed the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum. He also met with the Federal Advocates Chamber, spoke to law students at St. Petersburg State University, and chaired the second meeting of the BPC Rule of Law Working Group. During the Working Group meeting, the Attorney General noted the progress made to exchange experience in the area of prison reform and service of process in civil cases. He expressed support for cooperation in the area of legal education and, along with his Working Group co-chair, Russian Minister of Justice Alexander Kononov, decided on a way forward. At the Legal Forum, Attorney General Holder stressed the importance of international cooperation to combat transnational organized crime as well as the crucial roles of rule of law, transparency, and respect for individual rights in domestic politics and pledged U.S. support for the efforts of foreign governments in these areas. (*Rule of Law WG*)

► [Read](#) Attorney General Holder's remarks to the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum.

► [Click here](#) for Attorney General Holder's interview with ITAR-TASS.

Culture and Education

Hancock and Bridgewater Tour Russia

U.S. jazz legends Herbie Hancock and Dee Dee Bridgewater performed in Moscow and St. Petersburg as part of the “American Seasons” year-long series of cultural programs. Appearing with young jazz musicians from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, the group received an enthusiastic reception at Moscow’s International House of Music and the Mikhailovsky Theater in St. Petersburg. They also performed at Spaso House and gave master classes to Russian jazz musicians at the Gnessin Musical Academy in Moscow and the Hermitage Theater in St. Petersburg. *(Culture Sub-Working Group)*



Hancock and Bridgewater perform at the Mikhailovsky Theater in St. Petersburg. (Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate General St. Petersburg)

Lar Lubovitch at Benois de la Danse

Also as part of “American Seasons,” U.S. Embassy Moscow sponsored the visit of highly-regarded U.S. choreographer Lar Lubovitch to Benois de la Danse, an international dance competition and festival held annually in Moscow. The evening event at the Bolshoi Theater featured the announcement of the competition winners, including Lubovitch for choreography, and performances by several nominees in various categories, including two dancers from Lubovitch’s own company. *(Culture Sub-Working Group)*

Sci-Fi Writer Arrives in the Urals

Award-winning science fiction author [Michael Swanwick](#) traveled to Yekaterinburg to take part in the 29th International Sci-Fi Festival Aelita, May 23-26. The prominent U.S. writer was warmly received by his Russian fans and peers in the Urals. On the first day of the festival, Swanwick visited the Urals Writers Museum and its Virtual Science Fiction Hall. He also took part in the Festival’s Conference on Contemporary Science Fiction Images and Technologies, Young Authors’ Workshop, a roundtable on the Electronic Publishers’ Problems, and the Aelita Award Ceremony. *(Culture Sub-Working Group)*

Fechin Exhibit Opens at Tretyakov Gallery



Public Affairs Officer Michael Hurley speaks at the exhibit’s opening in Moscow. (Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

On May 22, U.S. Embassy Moscow joined Moscow’s Tretyakov Gallery, the U.S.-based Foundation for International Arts and Education (FIAE), and the Tatarstan Ministry of Culture to open an exhibition of the works of famous Russian-American painter Nikolai Fechin. The exhibit features paintings from different periods in Fechin’s life, including his early years in Kazan and his later life in the United States. Among the highlights are several masterpieces inspired by Fechin’s love of the American Southwest and its inhabitants. Organized by the

FIAE, the exhibition is a part of “American Seasons.” (*Culture Sub-Working Group*)

Pianist Christopher Taylor Performs in Perm
U.S. pianist Christopher Taylor, who last performed in Moscow in November 2011, was one of the featured musicians in the annual [Diaghilev Festival](#) in Perm, May 20-23. He gave three concerts, including a complex, two-hour solo performance of Olivier Messiaen’s “Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus.” (*Culture Sub-Working Group*)

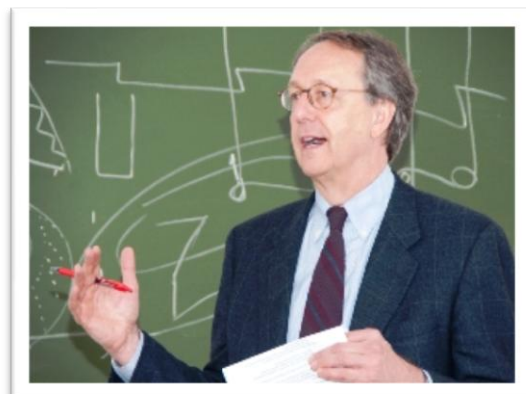


Taylor gives a concert during his recent trip to Russia.
(Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate Yekaterinburg)

U.S. Media Expert in Russian Far East

Andrew Alexander, former ombudsman of the *Washington Post* and Honorary Distinguished Visiting Professor at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, participated in the AEECA Speaker Program “Basics of Reporting for Convergent Media: Promoting Objectivity, Pluralism, and Independence” in Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, May 13-18. He conducted a series of master classes and presentations for journalism students at the Far Eastern Federal University and Far Eastern State Humanitarian University. Alexander also spoke on the importance of transparency in government relations with mass media at the Far Eastern Academy of Government. At American Corners in Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, he shared his view on freedom of information as a crucial tool

of democracy with the general public. (*Media Sub-Working Group*)



Andrew Alexander makes a presentation at the Far Eastern Federal University. (Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate General Vladivostok)

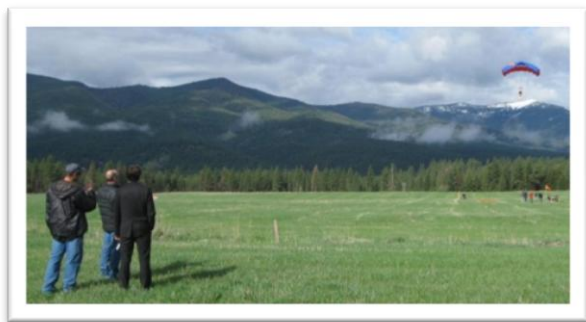
Joint Theater Production Marks Finale of “American Spring” in Yekaterinburg

Yekaterinburg’s Sverdlovsk Musical Comedy Theater premiered a new production of Hungarian composer Imre Kalman’s operetta “Duchess of Chicago” as the culmination of its “American Spring” season of cultural events, with the support of the U.S. Consulate. U.S. director Michael Unger, music director Greg Opelka, and choreographer Patty Colombo worked with the Russian cast for two months on the production, which features an American heroine’s adventures in 1920s Europe. (*Culture Sub-Working Group*)



The “Duchess of Chicago” travels to Yekaterinburg.
(Photo Credit: U.S. Consulate Yekaterinburg)

Environment, Science, and Tech



The U.S. Forest Service hosted three specialists from the V.N. Sukachev Institute of Forest and Avialesookhrana in Krasnoyarsk, Russia from April 20 to May 5. Here they observe smokejumper training in the American West. (Photo Credit: U.S. Forest Service)

Forty Years of Environmental Cooperation

U.S. and Russian scientists, environmental experts, and officials gathered at the U.S. Embassy on May 23 to celebrate four decades of cooperation to protect the environment. On that date in 1972, President Richard Nixon and Premier Nikolai Podgorny signed the [U.S.-USSR Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection](#). Today, the agreement is Russia's longest-running bilateral agreement on environmental cooperation. The 60 guests renewed old acquaintances and examined photos of meetings and expeditions over the past four decades, while younger participants learned about the achievements over the years. Writing in the event guest book, marine biologist and former top Russian environmental advisor Alexey Yablokov noted that U.S.-Soviet environmental cooperation was a "breakthrough of common sense." (*Environment WG*)

EPA Discusses Cooperation on Management of Legacy Contaminated Sites in Russia

Neilima Senjalia and Eleonora Barnes of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) visited Moscow to discuss planning for Phases 2 and 3 of U.S.-Russian cooperation on the management of legacy contaminated sites. The

new activities will be building on Phase 1 of the project—a technical exchange conducted in Washington, D.C. and New York in 2010. In the upcoming Phase, U.S. experts will share EPA experience in implementing Superfund and Brownfields Programs and discuss approaches on how to set up financial mechanisms, develop needed legislation, select technology, and undertake the technical clean-up of legacy sites. An important part of this effort is to create a transparent process and access to information to involve the public in decision-making activities related to remediation projects. The discussions included the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Economic Development, World Bank, U.N. Environment Programme, NGOs, and universities.

While in Russia, Barnes also gave talks in Kazan and Moscow as part of the U.S. Embassy Speakers Program. She told university students about U.S.-Russia environmental cooperation and shared approaches to address environmental problems, including replicability, sustainability, and measurable environmental results. She also met with the Ministry of the Environment of Tatarstan and the Public Chamber of Kazan to discuss their participation in the project on management of legacy contaminated sites. (*Environment WG*)

Joint Research Competition with Ural Branch of RAS

CRDF Global and the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) are currently accepting proposals for the 2012 Joint Basic Research Competition: Innovative Technologies and New Materials, Nanotechnology, Energy Research, Sustainable Resource Management, and Ecology of the Russian Far North. Up to five awards will be made for two years of support to joint research teams of U.S. and Russian scientists. The U.S.

funding comes from the Department of State and the National Science Foundation. For more information, please visit the [CRDF-Urals RAS Request for Proposals](#) webpage. (*Science and Technology WG*)

Wetlands Conservation Meeting in Far East

Three officials from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and the EPA attended a conference on problems of wetlands conservation and protection of migratory birds of Southeast Asia in Blagoveshchensk in the Amur region. The conference was held at the Far Eastern State Agrarian University, May 14-17. The U.S. delegation offered interviews and presentations to the audience of conservation professionals. Wetlands conservation is critical to the survival of many migratory birds in eastern Asia. (*Environment WG*)

Russians Examine U.S. Park and Reserve System



The Russian delegation visits the Red Rock Canyon National Recreation Area in Nevada. (Photo Credit: USFS)

Following similar exchanges in 2011, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) hosted an eight-person delegation of Russian protected area managers on a tour of National Forests, National Parks, and a National Wildlife Refuge located in Nevada, Utah, and California. Led by Vsevolod Stepanitsky, the head of the Russian protected area system, and including directors and deputy directors from parks and nature reserves across Russia, the delegation focused on sustainable recreation, education, and public participation.



The Russian delegation discusses park access issues at Zion National Park in Utah. (Photo Credit: USFS)

While earlier exchanges provided a broad overview of the protected area systems in the respective countries visited, this recent tour focused in-depth on the management of recreation, interpretation, and environmental education on public lands, as requested by the Russian delegation. USFS Internal Programs organized the exchange, with financial support from USAID, which also included visits to protected areas managed by the National Park Service, the FWS, the Bureau of Land Management, and USFS. Traditionally focused on conservation and scientific research, the Russian protected area system is increasingly prioritizing sustainable recreation and environmental education vis-à-vis its protected area policies. (*Environment WG*)

► [Click here](#) to read more about their visit.

Great Rivers Forum in Nizhny Novgorod

FWS officials took part in the 14th International Great Rivers Forum in Nizhny Novgorod, May 15-18. The Forum focused on managing riverine ecosystems to ensure optimal levels of water quality and quantity, restore and manage riverine and riparian wetlands, increase sustainable fishery stocks, and conserve internationally significant resources. The Forum offered the U.S. delegation an opportunity to explain rules and regulations enforced in the United States enforces to protect our river ecosystems. (*Environment WG*)

Health

Top U.S. and Russian Maternal and Child Experts Connect at Moscow Conference

During May 21-23, over 200 Russian and U.S. healthcare providers in the field of maternal and child health, NGOs, government health officials, and private medical organizations gathered at a conference to exchange expertise, discuss trends in healthcare, and present cutting-edge techniques for saving the lives of mothers and infants. Representatives from 26 Russian regions and three nearby countries participated in the conference. Ministry of Health officials and senior staff of the Kulakov Center for Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Perinatology were among the Russian participants. USAID/Russia Mission Director Charles North delivered opening remarks, as did former president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Richard Waldman. The conference marked the completion of a four-year USAID-supported project in maternal and child health, under which two NGOs—John Snow and Russia’s Institute for Family Health—worked with both the Russian Government and regional healthcare providers to institutionalize the most modern and effective practices at the regional and national level. *(Health WG)*



Over 200 health specialists from five countries attended the final conference of USAID’s Maternal and Child Health Initiative.
(Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

Discussions on the Health Working Group

On May 23, Dr. Nils Daulaire, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Global Health, met with Svetlana Axelrod of the Russian Ministry of Health’s Department of International Cooperation in Geneva, Switzerland on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly. The two discussed ongoing and future initiatives under the BPC Health Working Group, including plans for the signing of a U.S.-Russia Protocol of Intent on Malaria Cooperation, the final text of which is under review (see next item). Axelrod invited HHS to attend the June APEC meetings in St. Petersburg, which will feature a meeting of the APEC Health Working Group, a Life Sciences Innovation Forum, and a Forum on Women and the Economy. Axelrod expressed interest in sharing best practices on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and continuing collaboration on substance abuse work in Russia with the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Axelrod also praised ongoing collaboration between the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Russian Academy of Sciences. *(Health WG)*

Building on Polio Partnership, the United States and Russia Agree to Take on Malaria

In support of the Roll Back Malaria Initiative, the United States and Russia are moving forward on cooperation to end preventable child deaths from malaria, to reduce the burden of malaria during pregnancy, and to integrate worldwide strategies on global malaria control. Areas of collaboration include training and capacity building, evaluation, operational research, advocacy, and resource mobilization. The first technical exchange took place in mid-April in Moscow between Russia’s Ministry of Health and Social Development and a U.S. team of Dr. Bernard Nahlen, Deputy Coordinator of the President’s Malaria Initiative, and USAID

Security

Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Bureau of Europe and Eurasia Jonathan Hale. The two sides agreed on joint activities and draft language for a U.S.-Russia protocol on malaria cooperation. U.S.-Russia cooperation on malaria control builds on the partnership and joint activities under the U.S.-Russia Protocol of Intent for the global eradication of polio (signed January 2011) and fosters efforts to strengthen Russia's donor capacity. (*Health WG*)

NIH and RFBR Finalize Results of HIV/AIDS Research Competition

In mid-May, representatives the NIH Office of AIDS Research (OAR) and of a number of NIH Institutes met with a delegation from the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) to finalize the results of the first-ever joint research competition on HIV/AIDS prevention science. During the meeting, RFBR Chairman Professor Vladislav Panchenko added his signature to that of Dr. Jack Whittescarver, OAR Director, on the joint document recommending funding of 13 collaborative projects between Russian and U.S. scientists that were selected through a bilateral peer review process; the selected scientists were notified on June 5 after approval from the RFBR board. The two sides conducted an in-depth discussion of the lessons learned during the first round of funding initiatives, and also discussed the scientific focus areas and details for a future round of funding initiatives. (*Health WG*)



In connection with the BPC Emergency Situations Working Group, on May 25 Moscow-based USAID staff observed a live exercise conducted by EMERCOM, the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations, in Noginsk, Moscow region. This annual exercise showcases EMERCOM's technology and approaches to emergency response and rescue. (Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

Meeting of Nuclear Energy Leaders

During the week of May 21, a U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) delegation traveled to Moscow to participate in a Working Group meeting with Russian counterparts on the conversion of Russian Research Reactors from highly enriched uranium (HEU) to low enriched uranium (LEU). In 2010, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman and Rosatom Director General Sergey Kiriyenko signed an Implementing Agreement to perform feasibility studies on the conversion of Russian research reactors. Since then, the two parties have initiated work on eight feasibility studies. The Russian delegation provided updates on the status of the ongoing feasibility studies and the status of conversion activities for the ARGUS reactor. Representatives from Russia's fuel fabricator (TVEL) also provided updates to the group on dispersion fuel development for Russian reactors. (*Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security WG*)

Other Related Events

Nuclear Material Security Talks and Outreach Activities in St. Petersburg

The Co-Chairs of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) on Material Protection, Control, and Accounting (MPC&A) met in St. Petersburg, May 22-24, to discuss the status of nuclear material security cooperation between the United States and Russia. John Gerrard, DOE Assistant Deputy Administrator for International Material Protection and Cooperation, led the delegation for the United States, and Konstantin Denisov, Deputy Director General for Security in Rosatom, hosted the meeting for the Russian side. This JCC marks the twentieth meeting to discuss progress on the bilateral cooperation on nuclear security.

During May 29-31, DOE/NNSA's International Nonproliferation Export Control Program (INECP), Rosatom's Institute of Physics and Power Engineering (Obninsk), and Rosatom's Information Association of Enterprises in Nuclear Power and Industry (Inform-Atom), jointly conducted an enterprise outreach event in St. Petersburg for managers of companies in the North-West region of Russia. State Corporation Rosatom enterprises, which implement international contracts regarding controlled commodities and technologies subject to export control laws, also attended this event. (*Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security WG*)

U.S. Student Leaders at Embassy Moscow

On May 29, U.S. Embassy Moscow representatives met with a group of 16 U.S. university student body presidents to discuss the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship and serving in the U.S. Foreign Service in Russia. Organized by the Russian Youth Agency and the Center for American-Russian Engagement of Emerging Leaders (CAREEL), the student leaders' trip is the fourth trip of its kind under the auspices of the Bilateral Presidential Commission. During the 10-day trip, the young ambassadors are meeting with numerous high-ranking Russian officials and interacting with peers in order to learn more about Russia and to exchange ideas about fostering stronger relations.

► [Click here](#) for more event photos.



The U.S. student leader delegation's trip includes a meeting with U.S. Embassy staff. (Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Moscow)

USAID Child Welfare Project Holds National Discussion on Child Protection

April 25-27 in Moscow, USAID-grantee National Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NFPCC) conducted a national conference to present the first-ever draft of regional standards for services delivery to prevent child neglect and abandonment. The 220 conference participants from 66 Russian regions included high-level representatives from the Federal Ministries of Health and Social



Development, Education, Economic Development, and Internal Affairs. They discussed the role of NGOs in serving vulnerable children and families, the functions of guardianship bodies for foster care placement of orphans, oversight of foster care placement, and unveiled a new interactive map of Russian child welfare best practices currently being tested by NFPPC on their website. USAID-supported projects work to reduce the number of orphans in Russia, and significant progress has been made both nationally and in the pilot regions of Buryatia, Tomsk, and Yekaterinburg.

APEC Experts Group Meets on Illegal Logging and Trade

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Experts Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade held its second meeting in Kazan, Russia, May 21-23. Representatives from the Office of the United States Trade Representative, U.S. Forest Service, and the Departments of Justice and State discussed the role of the U.S. Lacey Act Amendments in combating illegal logging in the region. In addition, delegates from the APEC countries visited a nearby forest with local officials.

Fedotov and Media Lawyers Discuss New Federal Law on Electronic Media

At the American Center in Moscow on April 25, Russia's new Civil Code article defining web sites and internet-based media was reviewed by Mikhail Fedotov, Chairman of the Russian Federation Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights, together with a group of 25 media lawyers. Twelve other lawyers joined the discussion online. The webinar was coordinated by IREX's Council for Media Law under the USAID-supported Promoting New Media and Media Convergence Program.

Background on the BPC: President Obama and President Medvedev created the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission (BPC) in July 2009 to improve coordination between our countries, identify areas of cooperation, and pursue joint projects and actions that strengthen strategic stability, international security, economic well-being, and the development of ties between the Russian and American peoples. The BPC now consists of 20 working groups and numerous sub-working groups. Please visit the BPC website: www.state.gov/russiabpc or contact: russiabpc@state.gov

The BPC's 20 Working Groups are: •Agriculture •Arms Control and International Security •Business Development and Economic Relations •Civil Society •Counternarcotics •Counterterrorism •Defense Relations •Education, Culture, Sports, and Media •Emergency Situations •Energy •Environment •Health •Innovation •Intelligence •Military Cooperation •Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security •Policy Steering •Rule of Law •Science and Technology •Space Cooperation



Calendar of BPC Upcoming Events

May 29-June 16: Two U.S. Forest Service recreation specialists are traveling to the Lake Baikal region to consult on recreation and interpretation programs at a national park and a nature reserve. They will also lead training in Irkutsk for regional protected area managers.

June 4-22: Six regional Russian tuberculosis doctors will visit the United States to learn about federal, state, and community strategies on the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis.

June 7-19: Eight singers and three coaches from the Placido Domingo Center in Washington, D.C. will work with singers from the Vishnevskaya Opera Center and Bolshoi Opera in Moscow, and conclude their exchange visit with concerts there and in St. Petersburg.

June 8-24: The “Developing New ESP Policy and Models for the Russian ELT Community” project will promote the creation of new English learning models for future engineers, scientists, and technical specialists throughout Russia, in line with the need to bring practical English skills to today’s workplace.

June 9 and 11: The BPC Defense Relations Social Welfare Sub-Working Group will hold its third meeting in St. Petersburg. Participants plan to discuss survivor/veterans’ benefits and centralized payroll and pension services.

June 11-12: A DOE/NNSA delegation will travel to Hungary to meet with Russian counterparts for the 2012 Joint Coordination Committee meeting on the repatriation of Russian-origin highly enriched uranium.

June 14-21: The Mid-Atlantic – Russia Business Council (MARBC) is hosting the 16th Semi-Annual Russian-American Innovation

Technology Week (RANIT-BIO) in Philadelphia and Boston.

June 17-30: The Department of Commerce’s Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) office will conduct the second phase of a Presidential Management Training Exchange Program in Yekaterinburg.

June 20-30: With USAID support, the U.S. Forest Service and National Fire Protection Association will host a study tour on wildfire prevention and community and local solutions.

June 20-22: A film festival featuring U.S. short films and animation will be held at Yekaterinburg’s Dom Kino.

June 24-27: HHS and Russian Ministry of Health officials will jointly participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Health and Life Sciences Meetings in St. Petersburg.

June 25-27: The U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission conducts its fourth meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, where members will share scientific information to make progress on complementary harvest management plans.

June 26: U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman and Rosatom General Director Sergei Kiriyenko will co-chair the fifth Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security Working Group meeting in Moscow. They are expected to sign the Fourth Action Plan for the Working Group and discuss opportunities and ideas for 2013.

June 29: Native American Art [exhibit](#) opens at the Yekaterinburg Fine Arts Museum.

June 30-July 7: Eli Yamin Blues Band performs at the Usadba Jazz Festival in St. Petersburg, as well as in Krasnoyarsk and Abakan.



June 30-July 13: “Between the Lines” Writing Program takes place at the University of Iowa.

June-August 2012: More than 80 U.S. students will study Russian in Kazan, Ufa, or Vladimir through the Critical Language Scholarship Program, an eight-week program that increases language fluency and cultural competency.

July 2-5: A series of U.S. music events titled “Salut, America!” with participation of USAFE Five Star Brass Band will be held in Yekaterinburg to celebrate Independence Day.

July 7-20: Through the Sports Sub-Working Group, 20 Russian students and their coaches will travel to California for a youth beach volleyball program. While there, they will interact with U.S. student athletes and engage in team building, conflict resolution, and other activities.

July 9-10: The Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will hold the [2nd Research Center Proposer’s Conference](#) at Skolkovo.

July 9-20: The art exhibit “American Icons in Jars” will open in Vladivostok.

July 12-15: A speaker from the U.S. Mission will join Innoprom in Sverdlovsk Oblast, Russia’s largest exhibition of innovative industrial technologies from around the world.

July 14-27: A group of 20 U.S. Youth Sports Envoys will travel with their coaches to Russia on a swimming-focused exchange program.

July 15-25: A U.S. delegation from the Missouri Botanical Gardens will visit Altai, Siberia, to exchange information regarding plant conservation while working with the Central Siberian Botanical Garden.

July 17-19: In Moscow, U.S. Geological Survey representatives will co-host a workshop on geological hazards (earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis). Participants will identify areas where U.S.-Russia cooperation on disaster risk reduction can improve.